between the two versions. I think it probable that it has become less frequent for several brothers to have only one wife in common, but I am very doubtful whether this indicates any real decrease in the prevalence of polyandry. 178 182 595

It seems to me that the correct way of describing the present condition of Toda society is to say that polyandry is as prevalent as ever, but that, owing to the greater number of women, it is becoming associated with polygyny. When there are two brothers it does not seem that each takes a wife for himself but rather that they take two wives in common.

It is probable that this will lead in time to a state of society in which each brother will come to regard one wife as his own; and in a few cases it seemed to me that there was already a tendency in this direction. If this forecast should be fulfilled, the custom of monogamy among the Todas will have been developed out of polyandry through a stage of combined polyandry and polygyny.

One case happened during my visit which seemed to indicate that though several brothers might be regarded as husbands of a woman, the part of husband for ceremonial purposes might be taken only by one or two of them. In this case I was told that four brothers had one wife, but when the wife died only two of the brothers acted as widowers and performed the ceremonies associated with that condition. When I asked for an explanation of this, I was then told that the other two brothers were not husbands, but I strongly suspected that this was a mere device to enable two of the brothers to avoid the disabilities attendant on the condition of widowerhood. I have very little doubt that while the woman was alive, all the four brothers were her husbands, but after her death it became convenient to assume that only two had been husbands, leaving the others free from the restrictions of widowerhood. 595 765

Many writers have believed that the widely spread custom of the Levirate is a relic of polyandry. If it were true that the custom of polyandry is dying out among the Todas, this people might have provided material for the study of the relations of polyandry and the Levirate. It will be obvious, 587 595

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

587 however, from the account already given, that polyandry is still
595 strongly established among the Todas. Still, there are a few cases in the genealogies which seem to show that when two brothers had different wives, and one brother died, the widow might be taken by the surviving brother. Thus, in Table 34, two brothers, Matovan and Kemners, had one wife, Sargveli, while Atcharap had his own wife, Puners. When Matovan died, Sargveli was regarded as the wife of both Atcharap and Kemners.[1] Again, after the deaths of Mulpolivan and Peigvan (3), the widow of Nersveli was married by Perol, the clan-brother (first cousin) of the husband.

In other cases, the widow of one brother has not become the wife of her husband's brothers, but has married elsewhere; and though the evidence is necessarily very unsatisfactory, it seems on the whole probable that the Todas show no special relation between polyandry and the Levirate custom.

If the widow marries a man who is not one of the brothers of her dead husband, the new husband has to pay a certain number of buffaloes. He does not, however, give these buffaloes to the brothers of the dead man, but to his children; thus, when Karnisi of Päm (37) died, his widow, Nersaveli, married Mutthuvan (34) of Kanòdrs, who paid fourteen buffaloes to Pungievan, the son of Karnisi. This payment of buffaloes is known as *terkudrichti*, "compensation he gives," and it is the custom for the number of buffaloes in this case to be twice the number given by the dead man for his wife; in this case Karnisi had taken Nersaveli from another man for seven buffaloes.

In relation to the Levirate, the important point here is that the buffaloes are paid to the sons of the dead husbands, not to his brothers.

174 I do not think that the Todas provide any definite evidence
847 towards the solution of the vexed question of the relation
595 between polyandry and infanticide. It is possible that at their first arrival in the Nilgiri Hills, the Todas had few sources of food, and had a severe struggle for existence; that

[1] It will be noticed that I am using the term 'Levirate' in a wider sense than that in which it is sometimes employed, for Sargveli was not a childless widow.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

Exchange of Brother and Sister

582 583 Although I was not told that it was the custom for a brother and sister of one clan to marry a sister and brother of another, examination of the genealogies makes it clear that this frequently happens. A good example which may be cited is the marriage of Kuriolv (52) with Punaveli (65), while Sinkòrs, the sister of Kuriolv, married the three brothers of Punaveli. Two other similar instances may be found in Table 52, and they are of general occurrence throughout the genealogies.

In some communities this custom of exchange is definitely connected with the bride-price, which may be so large as almost to compel a man to give his sister in exchange for the wife he takes from another clan. In the case of the Todas the bride-price is so inconsiderable that it is unlikely that it would form a motive for exchange, and I think it improbable that in such marriages as those cited above, the idea of exchange is even definitely formulated, but that the combination of marriages comes about for such obvious reasons as may occur in any community. The marriage of *matchuni*, if widely practised, would obviously lead to an appearance of exchange, and it may be that among the Todas this is the chief cause of its occurrence.

Similarly, instances will be found in the genealogies of two brothers (or two groups of brothers) marrying sisters. An example may be given from Table 53, where Orzevan marries one woman and his two brothers marry her sister. Another instance may be found in Table 58.

587 595 In several cases in which a man or group of men have had two wives the wives have been related. Thus, Kutthurs (12) and his brothers first married Tedjveli (16). After her death, Kutthurs, the only surviving brother, married Sabnir (34), the daughter of Arsner, Tedjveli's sister. Again, Paners (23) and his brothers first married Pergveli, and when she died they married her brother's daughter. Pungusivan (53) married his *matchuni*, Sinodz (68), and when she was taken from him by the *tererstthi* custom, he married Sintharap, her sister.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

There is often very great disproportion of age in Toda marriages. I have already given two cases in which the woman is the older, in each of which the disproportion of age is due to the custom of marrying a *matchuni*. More commonly the man is much the older, and there are at the present time many cases in which elderly men are married to young girls. This is partly due to the practice of infant marriage. Unless a widower can take advantage of the *tererstthi* custom, which is always expensive, he may have to marry a child and wait till she has reached a marriageable age. Thus, Kòdrner, my guide, lost his wife some years ago, and then married a girl whose present[1] age is only thirteen, Kòdrner being forty-two. The girl is still living with her parents, and will probably not go to her husband for another three or four years.

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[587]

THE CUSTOM OF 'TERERSTHI

The marriage tie among the Todas at the present time has become very loose. Wives are constantly transferred from one husband, or group of husbands, to another, the new husband or husbands paying a certain number of buffaloes to the old. The amount of the compensation or *ter* is settled by a council, and from this the transaction has received its name of *tererstthi*, or "compensation he tells (decides)."[2]

[581]

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There is much reason to believe that this custom has altered its character in recent times. I was told that formerly the custom only applied to cases in which a man had lost his wife by death. If he wished to marry a woman who was already the wife of another or others, he went to the father of the woman and asked for his consent. The father would consult with two other elders, and if they were in favour of the proposed transaction the three elders would go to the woman, and if they obtained her consent they then went to her husband for his. If husband or wife were unwilling to be parted nothing was done, but if both consented, the new and

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[1] In 1902.

[2] *Ter* is also used in the sense of 'fine,' but is only used when the fine takes the form of a buffalo or buffaloes. A money fine is called *sazve*.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

586 the old husband, the father of the woman, and the two elders
587 met and decided on the number of buffaloes to be given as *ter* or compensation. This meeting was called *tererssthi*. The *ter* had to be paid within a month, and all the buffaloes given had to be females. The man who was giving up the woman went to the village of the new husband and received his buffaloes, of which he was allowed to choose a certain number. If he had been awarded more than four buffaloes, he might choose three, if four or less, he might only choose two. Among the Tartharol, a man would usually choose *wursulir*, and among the Teivaliol, *pasthir*.

At the present time the number of buffaloes given as *ter* varies very greatly; the most frequent number is three, but often more are given, and in one case, about ten years ago, a man had to give twenty-five. The number seems to depend largely on the size of the herd possessed by the man taking a new wife. The more buffaloes he has, the more he has to pay.

[574] When the buffaloes are given, the new husband has to give a feast, after which the old husband drives away his buffaloes. In a recent case Teigudr of Nòdrs (4) had taken Uwer from Nertolvan and Palpa of Pan (16) for nine buffaloes. These two men went to the village of Tedshteiri, where Teigudr was living, and were feasted, the food being cooked on nine ovens, corresponding to the number of the buffaloes. This correspondence between the number of the ovens and of the buffaloes given as *ter*, suggests that there may have been some definite ceremonial in connexion with this feast of which I failed to obtain an account.

183 The custom of *tererssthi* has some reason on its side.
586 Wherever infant marriage exists in a small community, it
587 must often happen that a widower finds all the women of his community married, and without some machinery by which he is allowed to take the wife of another, he must remain unmarried or be content with marriage to a mere child. Even at the present time, we have seen that an adult man who has lost his wife may marry a girl only a few years of age.[1]

[1] For an instance in the past see p. 538.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

At the present time the custom of *terersthi* has a far wider range. It is obvious that when a widower takes the wife of another he is simply transferring his difficulty, and the man whose wife he has taken will have to seek a new partner. It often happens that a man takes the wife of a boy married, perhaps, to a girl of about the same age as himself, and when this boy reaches manhood he will have to seek a wife and will naturally try to obtain the wife of another rather than be content with a child perhaps only three or four years of age. It would be impossible that such a custom as that of *terersthi* should remain limited in scope, but there is no doubt that at the present day it has become the custom for any man who takes a fancy for the wife of another to endeavour to obtain her for himself, and I was told that he would give large bribes to the elders of the Todas to attain his object. It seems quite clear that, at the present time, it is not considered necessary to obtain the consent either of the wife or of the husband, and in some cases the wife has been taken from her husband by force.[1]

In some recent cases the aggrieved parties in such disputes have appealed to the Government, and during my visit a petition was being drawn up for presentation to the Governor of Madras, asking that the abuses of the *terersthi* custom should be remedied.

DIVORCE

Divorce exists among the Todas quite apart from the transference of wives just considered.

I was told that a man divorces his wife for two reasons, and for two only, the first reason being that the wife is a fool and the second that she will not work. Barrenness is not generally regarded as a reason for divorce, though I was told of one case in which a man had sent away his wife on this account. It seemed more usual in such a case to take a second wife. In some cases the illness of the husband has been regarded as a ground for divorce. Intercourse between

[1] For an instance see p. 535.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

[837] a wife and another man is not regarded as a reason for divorce but rather as a perfectly natural occurrence. Intercourse between

586 627 684 When a man divorces his wife, the woman's people usually complain to the *naim* or council, but if it is decided that the man shall take his wife back, there appears to be no way of compelling him to do so. In any case the husband pays a fine (*kwadr*) of one buffalo to the wife's people, just as he would have done if he had refused to take her when she reached the marriageable age, but he receives back any buffaloes he may have given as *pòdri*. Even if the council decides that the man ought to take his wife back and he refuses, a fine greater than one buffalo cannot be inflicted.

587 If the divorced woman re-marries, the previous husband does not receive anything, and any buffaloes given become the property of the woman's family.

THE MOKHTHODITI INSTITUTION

588 837 851 616 595 In addition to the regular marriage, there is another recognised mode of union between men and women, which is called *mokhthoditi*. The man who becomes the consort of a woman in this way is called her *mokhthodvaiol*—viz., "man who keeps *mokh*,"[1] and the woman is called *sedvaitasmokh*—viz., "woman who joins." The *mokhthoditi* union differs from the regular marriage in one important respect. It may be, and usually is, formed between Tarthar men and Teivali women, or between Teivali men and Tarthar women. The great majority of instances of which I heard were of this kind. One woman might have more than one *mokhthodvaiol*, the largest number of which I heard being three. Similarly, a man might have more than one *sedvaitasmokh*, but as the custom entailed considerable expenses on the man, this was not common, and I did not hear of any instance in which a man had more than two.

The *mokhthodvaiol* has no rights over any children who might be supposed to be his; they are regarded as the children of the regular marriage. This would be the case

[1] *Mokh* here means 'child' in general, not son.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

children as his—though each woman is mother only to her own—and each male child is an heir to the property of all of the fathers.

X. In order to avoid the complications that would arise, in the matter of food and the guardianship of property, from the re-marriage of widows, if they entered other families, taking their children with them; either a brother or other near relation of her deceased husband, takes her to wife. She 'remains in the family.' Such is Toda expression.

The following was early Semitic custom (*see* Deuteronomy xxv. 5): 'If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger; her husband's brother'—or 'next kinsman,' says a marginal note—'shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother[9] unto her.' This practice, is either pure polyandry, or it pertains to that extreme communistic state of society, to which, as I shall shortly demonstrate, polyandry belongs.

I met on one occasion, the instance of a man who had just separated from a very good-looking young wife of about fourteen years of age, in order that he might marry his elder brother's widow. It was looked on as a matter of course that the widow should 'remain in the family:' and the retention of two wives, in a community where the women are considerably in the minority, is out of the question. The girl had immediately espoused another; for until children have been born, the Todas do not mind the marriage of a widow out of the family.

These and other instances of the grave, practical, and undeviating nature of this curious people, made a great impression on me at the time.

Perhaps the feeling which engrosses the Toda mind more

[9] To raise up seed unto the brother.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

of what he calls "group marriage" tending more and more to look upon one of the women as his own (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 519).

From what has been stated above, it will be clear that, because of many rules and regulations about whom one may marry and whom one may not, Todas, apart from child-marriage, find it difficult, when adult, to get themselves a wife. The number of women is very limited, and many of them are ineligible because of social barriers, so that not a few men would remain single were it not for the time-honoured custom of *terershti*, or that of the transfer of wives. Rivers describes the latter as a sort of peaceful pact which is negotiated at a meeting between the husband or husbands of a woman and a man or a group of men who wish to take her to wife, compensation (*ter*) to be paid to the losing party in buffaloes being decided first, (*terershti*, "compensation he decides", see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 523).

But when I was in the Nilgiris, transference of wives never took place except forcibly, and it was up to the *noim*, after the abduction had taken place, to fix the amount of animals that should be paid to the aggrieved party in compensation. Nowadays, no longer content with taking the case to the *noim*, some Todas are appealing direct to the Government for help, requesting even that the latter intervene actively to put an end to a custom which, with time, and no doubt because of outside influence, is becoming increasingly distasteful to them. So long, however, as there exists so great a disproportion between the numbers of men to women, and tribal regulations concerning moiety endogamy and clan exogamy are so strictly observed, there seems to be no other solution for the men to the dearth of wives than continually to be taking them from one another, while paying due compensation, so that all of them have at least a time during which they are married.

Some Toda women whom I have met have been wives to no less than seven men or groups of men, remaining with these for a year or so before being carried off again by another or others. Among them have been those who have taken pride in recounting how many buffaloes were paid in compensation for them, as in the eyes of the men their prestige seems to be in direct proportion to the importance of the figure. Women carried off leave their children if the latter are big enough, but take them with them to their new home if they are small. When they grow up, they will return to the clan of their official father.

Of course, what makes it easier for Toda men to accept polyandry and the stealing of each other's wives, is that fatherhood of the off-

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

which can often last for nearly an hour. The relatives now depart and return to the village, leaving the man and woman to cook themselves a meal. They return later, however, and all spend the night together in the *shola*, before going back to the *mad* in the morning, when a feast, open to visitors as well, is held.

Performance of the *pursütpimi* ceremony determines once and for all the fatherhood of all children borne by a woman. It need not be repeated as long as it is desired that the same man should continue to be the father of other children brought into the world by the woman. Thus, dead men can well be considered the parent of later offspring, and will continue to be looked upon as such, unless a new *pursütpimi* ceremony with another man be performed.

In most cases it is the husband who is called upon to give the bow and arrow; in the case of a plurality of husbands, one of them, not necessarily the eldest, will do so, and it is not customary to repeat it with another one of the husbands when once done by one of them. That is why men who have failed for one reason or another to procreate children, will preferably carry off the pregnant wives of others, so that when they go through with the ceremony, they will, all the same, become fathers. This was the case with the famous Toda Kuriolv (22) who, having become impotent from a wound received from a buffalo which he caught in his youth at a Toda funeral, was, nevertheless, able to have legal heirs even if they were not his own physiological sons. In cases of pregnancy having been brought about by intermoiety concubinage, a man of the same division as the woman is obliged to give the bow and arrow when she reaches her seventh month, should no one have done this for her before. The child would otherwise be illegitimate, something unheard of with the Todas.

In accordance with this system of legally determining paternity, the legitimacy of the children is assured, as no case is known in which a man could not be found to perform the *pursütpimi* ceremony for a pregnant woman. Even in instances of premarital impregnation, the girl having been "married" at an early stage to her *mutchuni*, even if the latter is not available for some reason to give her the bow and arrow, some other suitable male partner will always be found for her.

When a woman is carried away from her husband or husbands to become the wife of another man or group of men, and is subsequently compensated for by a fixed amount of buffaloes, the proceedings are not considered by the Todas to be those of a divorce. With them, that is something quite different, with a decidedly disparaging connotation

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

the stubborn resistance of Piliar, who stood guard at the door of Tödhen's house at Apersgor, and who assured me that "Toda and Western medicine do not mix". Curiously enough, the victim agreed with his tormentor, and refused to follow me. In such cases the man usually resigns himself to a death which he feels the gods desire, but Tödhen somehow, in this case, recovered and did not die.

3. TODA POLYANDRY

The custom of polyandry is a very old one with the tribe. When questioned, the Todas will tell you that they have always practised it, and that its origins are unknown – it seems so natural a form of marriage to them. Their mythology mentioned polyandrous gods, therefore, obviously, they say, this type of matrimony has always existed.

Terkish, it seems, married an ordinary Toda called Püth who, after his death was deified. With him, the mother-goddess of the Nilgiris had thirteen children, eleven boys and two girls. None of these children married, except two of the sons, Podzövördjen and Pödjövorj, these polyandrously to an ordinary Toda woman called Notirsh. She too, after her death, became a goddess, now well-known to all Todas. From this polyandrous marriage of the gods, Kwotèn, the man-god who ran after Terkosh and was eventually carried off by her (see p. 265), was born. He married Mütürpani, a Toda woman and not a goddess, and had two sons by her, Koltawutn and Kshörwutn, of whom there are still descendants alive today (at a *mad* called *Kiaper* according to my 1939 notes, which I unfortunately have not been able to identify since; the late Ujar (48) having been my principal informant for the above).

Toda polyandry is mostly fraternal, as is usually the case elsewhere as well. But there are some cases of non-fraternal polyandry, although I, personally, found that, in those cases, the husbands were clan-brothers, that is, of the same clan and of the same generation which, in accordance with the classificatory type of Toda kinship, makes them look upon each other as brothers. Thus Wunkwur and Manarn of Norsh were married jointly to Puvamut of Tarar and lived together at the Norsh *mad*, where I often had occasion to visit them. She had been married to the first of her husbands (sons of two brothers) because he was her *matchuni*; then Wunkwur took her to wife from his cousin by paying Manarn a certain amount of buffaloes, but after some time, the latter returned and by giving half of the buffaloes back was accepted again as Puvamat's husband. *Pursiltpimi* was, however, performed for

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

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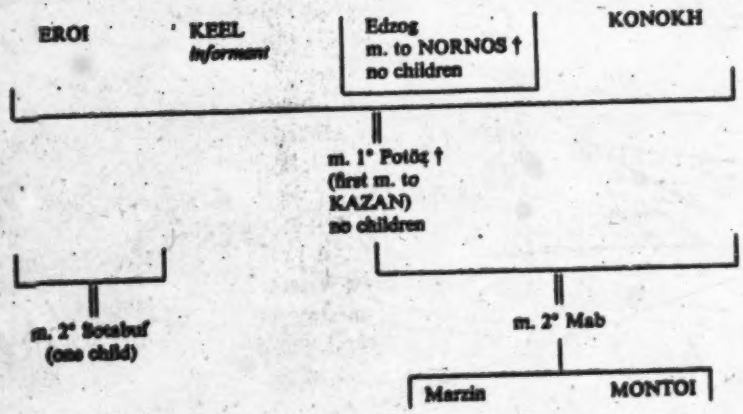
TABLE 21. GENEALOGY OF THE ARSHMAD OF KUUR (TEIVILKH) MODOL.



Note: This is how Keel described it to me, but according to Rivers it would seem that Eroi had been married twice before, Keel and Konokh once each respectively, and the girl, Edzog, at least four times previously, twice polyandrously to successively three and two husbands (see Rivers, *The Todas*, genealogical table No. 56).

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Males in capital letters
Females in small type
† = dead
m. = married

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

595 [621] [592]

his estimate. As it was, I found nearly always at least two polyandrous households in every single *mund* that I visited in 1939, and never one in which there was no polyandry.

At Or, a *mad* belonging to the Norsh *modol*, I found four brothers married to one woman, with the two elder brothers married to another woman, and living with her in another house a little further away. At Pakharkwur, a Karsh *mad*, a man named Nipö, already father of five girls, had lately been joined by his younger brother, because the latter had recently lost his wife, and the mother of the children had had to accept him as a husband as well. Here also, two other brothers had one wife in common, and, as in the previous case, had put up a separate household close-by. Another good example of polyandry among the Tardharsh moiety of the tribe (to which the above mentioned people belonged), was that of the Melgarsh *etumad* (chief *mad*), in which there were three older men sharing one wife, and their three sons married in the same way to a single woman. In a separate house of the *mad*, two cousins of the previous men had likewise a common wife between them. We shall return more fully to Melgarsh in the second part of this chapter, when the account of the special study which I made in 1949 of that *mad* will be given.

601 595

Among the Teivilkhs, I also found many polyandrous unions when I visited the Todas for the first time in 1939. Thus at Kiur, a Kuur *mad* I saw two brothers with one wife in common, the mother of one child. At Arsh *mad* (Badaga name: Anekkalmund), belonging to the same Kuur *modol* of the Teivilkh, I met Eroï, Keel and Konokh (56), the last two living polyandrously with a woman called Mab, after they had earlier shared another one called Potöz. I found these people so friendly and interesting that I stayed some time with them in order to become better acquainted with their history and way of living.

On June 19th, 1939, I made their genealogy, which was then as recorded in Table 21.

[584]

Potöz, to whom the three brothers had earlier been married polyandrously, had herself first been betrothed, I was told, to her *matchuni* Kazan, at the age of two, as is the Toda custom. When she came of age, however, after due compensation had been paid to Kazan's family, she married the three brothers from Arshmad, but fell ill very early and died before she could bear them any children.

[467] [587]

Then the following occurred: Eroï found employment as a government peon, and decided to leave the association. He married the girl called Sotabuf, took away one third plus two of the buffaloes owned

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

jointly by himself and by his brothers, and founded his own home elsewhere (at Kuudi *mad*, of the Pietarl *modol*). After he had left, the next eldest brother, Keel, went and asked Mab's parents if he and his brother Konokh could marry their daughter. The latter was already married, and so a long discussion ensued about how many buffaloes should be paid in compensation to the husband. Finally an amount of nine buffaloes was decided upon between Mab's father and the *noim*, called together specially to decide the case, (the husband was blissfully oblivious of all this, as is usual; had he discovered what was going on, he could have summoned Keel before the *noim* to explain himself and have asked for him to be fined if he did not really marry his wife Mab). Keel thought this amount of nine buffaloes too much, and departed in a huff, taking the other third plus two of the buffaloes with him. Konokh, more accommodating, however, accepted, and Mab became his.

Soon after her first pregnancy and before the birth of Marzin (for whom Konokh, the only husband at the time, gave the bow and arrow), Mab's father died. On hearing this, Keel decided to return home, and to share his brother's wife with him. Fortunately he had not married in the meantime, otherwise he would not have been allowed back, it seems. He had first to obtain the consent of Mab, of her mother, of her brothers and of Konokh, and having been given permission, he joined the marriage as a second husband. He brought the buffaloes he had taken away with him back again, gave one to Konokh and one to Mab's brothers, merging the remainder with those of his brother so as to share them jointly as before. He also paid Rs. 3 to the *noim* to regularize his reunion and make it publicly recognized. Montoï, the boy, was born later, the fruit of this polyandrous marriage, but Konokh remained the official father, as he, although the youngest, had performed the *pursütpimi* in the first instance.

The arrangements about buffaloes as described above are by no means the usual ones with Todas, each man generally owning his own, even in polyandrous arrangements. Contrary to other people who practise polyandry, the Todas do not habitually share their property in common, and do not fear to divide it. Practically their only wealth consists of their herds of buffaloes, and these they distribute among themselves regardless of their family attachments. With the Todas it can definitely be said that polyandry and the ownership of property are in no way related. We shall see some good examples of this when we analyse to whom the buffaloes of Melgarsh individually belong.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

married Nalsirwuf, ceased being head of his immediate family (although he was chief of the Melgarsh *modol*) and Pads, who already was the legal father of Mutnarsh, Kuddhue and Munbokwutn, became so in his place. The mother never has any very important say in family matters, and is treated as nothing more than an exalted kind of house servant.

As I have shown when discussing the question of Toda aggression, there is considerable jealousy among members of the tribe, in such matters as property and prestige. In sexual matters, however, there seems to be less of it, no doubt because their institutions allow for a number of outlets for their varying sexual fancy. Thus, the custom of *terershti* allows a man to carry off the neighbour's wife whom he covets, provided compensation in buffaloes is paid to the aggrieved party, and that of *mokhthoditi* for him to take as partner any woman of the tribe regardless of the moiety to which she belongs. There are other examples that could be quoted, such as, for instance, the privilege enjoyed by the lower class of Teivilkh priest of free access to all the women of the *mad* in which they serve and the Toda-Muduga exchange of wives of which Fürer-Haimendorf has spoken.

In spite of this, however, Kanvarsathi and various of my informants were unanimous in stating that sexual jealousy did exist among the Todas and, as they said, "more than it used to". There is a growing modern trend of resistance to *terershti*, the authority of the *noim* in such matters being often challenged now by an appeal to the Government. Again, informants claimed that the Todas did not take so readily any more to polyandry as before – although I, personally, could not see any falling away from this traditional form of marriage. The fact is, however, that jealousy with the Todas is not as curbed as it is with other polyandrous people. Because the property is divided between the brothers, it is as if jealousy were not banned as a serious threat to economic well-being as it is with others. The Todas, to put it briefly and in the language of polyanders elsewhere, "can afford to be jealous", and they are so at times with those outbursts of homicidal violence of which I have spoken earlier, when treating of the subject of their aggression.

Regulation of sexual intercourse in a Toda polyandrous household is again a matter af tacit understanding between the plural partners. Asked if there were any signalling system, my informants without exception ridiculed the idea, stating that it might perhaps have existed in the past but certainly did not now. During my entire stay in the Niligiris, I never came across any evidence of it. In the Melgarsh family, which I specially studied, it appeared that the common wife, Erzigwuf, had no

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

[Melgarsh Village]

159 621 central a figure in this family, her story should be, I think, a bit elaborated. She was born a member of the Pan clan of the Tardharsh moiety, the daughter of a woman called Monkiz of the Kiaror *modol* and officially of Tinmarsh, and a man of Pan. I say "officially" because actually Monkiz already had a husband, Ürshen of Melgarsh, by whom she was [587] expecting. But, as is very usual with the Todas, she was carried off by Tinmarsh when he heard that she was with child and, after due compensation had been paid to Ürshen, he gave her the bow and arrow in the *putsütpimi* ceremony. Monkiz died soon after, and the newborn [846] Erzigwuf was more or less abandoned, her father going off with another woman who did not care for her at all. She would have died had it not been for Terzivel, her paternal grandmother, who took her to the *mad* Natersh and looked after her. At a very early age, as is the Toda custom, she was married to her *matchuni* (cross-cousin), Kishkil of Kiaror. [587] When she came of age, she was married to Alvurvishk of Karsh, who paid six buffaloes to Kishkil in compensation for taking her away. She had no children by this husband, who actually died soon after the wedding. He was succeeded by Mutnarsh of Melgarsh and his brothers, her present husbands. She at first had four still-born children, for which 159 621 the family roundly abused her; she was very depressed by this and wanted to commit suicide, but could never actually bring herself to do it. 845 Then she went to Palani in the plains (a Tamil temple famous for its [762] pilgrimages) and made a vow to the deity. Soon after, she was again [842] expecting, and this time she gave birth to her first son, Pershrörsh. Then she had the other two children, and again went to Palani as, after Pengalam, six years passed without her having any more children. Mutnarsh went with her, and they both prayed in the temple, she for a boy and he for a girl, each without knowing about the other. The result was Sodup [777] and Sodam, a pair of twins which the Todas consider very unlucky (in olden days one of them was immediately put to death). In this case, however, the *teuol* (Toda seer) when consulted told them that it was all right, because obviously their wish had been fulfilled after she and Mutnarsh had, in ignorance of each other, prayed for a child of different sex. They later returned again to Palini, and the twins which were born when I was at Melgarsh came, it was called, as a result of this last pilgrimage. How they were received will be narrated below. Erzigwuf 159 had a lover, Kalorst of Pier, for some time (two years), as is the cus- 621 tom with Todas, but eventually Mutnarsh quarrelled with him and he left. She seems very happy in her present family life, and is always sur- [837] rounded by her children who cling to her like chicks to a hen.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala Toda AW60

him to delve into the intimate details of tribal customs. He was also a very intelligent individual who fully grasped the interest of anthropological research, and was keen to make use of the results in the hope of improving the material condition of the Todas. Without his assistance, it is doubtful whether I would have acquired so penetrating an insight into the Toda way of life, something for which I am extremely grateful to him.

Kanvarsathi's father was a rather notorious character among the Todas called Kiunervan (Table 14 of Rivers' genealogical tables) who had no less than eleven wives, one after the other. Kanvarsathi was the only son of the eleventh wife, and was born in 1905 at the Toda village of Paletkwar (known as Attakoraimand in the language of the Badagas) near Or, on the left-hand side of the Ootacamund-Gudalur road. Two months after his birth, his mother died, and his half-sister, Sinkup, later wife of Ujar (48, Rivers' Ushadz, one of my best informants), a daughter of his father's second wife, took him away with her and very grudgingly looked after him.

Six years later, Kiunervan also died, leaving one boy, Kanvarsathi, and two elder girls. The total number of his father's offspring had not been very great, despite the eleven wives. There were, altogether, only three sons and two daughters, of which two boys died before Kanvarsathi was born, and the two girls after, leaving him the sole survivor. Strictly speaking he became the only heir to his father's estate, which consisted, at the time of death, of sixty buffaloes and some gold ornaments – quite a considerable fortune according to Toda standards. But because he was a minor, his father's brothers' sons – his first cousins on his father's side – took the property into their custody until he should come of age. Being, however, most unscrupulous, and believing that Kanvarsathi would never find out, these cousins gradually disposed of the estate to their own advantage, so that when the time came for them to hand it over, all that he got were six buffaloes and two pairs of ear-rings.

When he was ten years old, he found out the real state of affairs and how he was being done out of his legitimate inheritance. He appealed against this to the Toda Government Agent, the Monegar, and to the most influential Toda of his day, the famous Kuriolv (52, properly speaking, Kiusharf in Toda, the other name being Badaga), but to no avail. These important people could not be bothered with the complaints of so small a boy, and all he got for his trouble was to be made to look after their buffaloes. This unfairness deeply wounded him, and